

CREATING MORE FIRSTS



DPP Director of Innovation, **Ariel Gruswitz** says a robust innovation ecosystem is crucial to Delaware's economic future

Delaware Prosperity Partnership has been busy attracting more future innovators

also getting input from the local real estate community on ideas they felt would work.

"These funds will be used to grants going 9[toward] industrial or warehouse facilities that could be turned into lab space," Gruswitz said.

Another accomplishment for DPP in 2020 was identifying 25 key people from state government, the private sector, and key higher-education institutions to serve on what is essentially a reinvigorated model of the Science & Technology Council. Gruswitz said the Council had "fallen by the wayside over the past 20 years." Governor John Carney serves as Co-Chair of the DPP Board, and the Science & Tech Advisors group will offer recommendations.

"We have a rich 200+ year history of science and technology," Gruswitz said last January. "In many ways, this is a unique place." In the past year, DPP has been busy building on that tradition of science and technology. Last month, DPP presented to the Council on Development Finance (CDF) and requested up to \$3 million from the state's Strategic Fund for a pilot program.

"The lack of ready-to-go lab space has been an ongoing issue," Gruswitz says. "It's an issue everywhere, and it's been an issue in Delaware since DPP got started.

"We've looked at some ways we can help provide support from the public sector and get the private sector more engaged and more aware of the issue.

"This particular type of program, to my knowledge, has not been done before in Delaware."

Before securing the \$3 million, Gruswitz and the DPP team spent a year and half doing research on the subject: looking at what other states have done while

"[We recently discussed] what a tech-based economy in a state really means and what are the key pieces of that," Gruswitz said. "And [what are] the roles the private sector plays and the higher- education institutions play.

"It's exciting because it's an opportunity to influence the economic development strategy for the state in terms of the science and technology sectors, and that includes entrepreneurship and high-tech-based startup companies."

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